

# Deck out your home



### Materials

- Pre-mixed bags of concrete
- Stumps
- Bearers
- Joists
- Nails – galvanised bullet heads
- Bolts
- Merbau decking

### Timber options

- For stumps – red gum, treated pine, cypress pine
- For bearers and joists – seasoned hardwood or treated radiata pine
- For decking – merbau, batu, jarrah, treated radiata pine

### Tools and equipment

- Shovel ● spirit level ● hammer
- power saw ● circular saw ● string
- tape measure ● claw hammer
- electric drill and bits set
- adjustable wrenches

Be the envy of your friends by building a deck to enjoy balmy nights this summer. It also adds an elegant and roomy extension to your dream home.

**D**ecks will add immense value to your property, as well as create a strong outdoor entertaining environment. They are fantastic at ground level or raised, multi-level, around pools, or incorporated into the landscape to highlight a spectacular tree. Adding a pergola or shade sail and incorporating elegant outdoor furniture can further enhance decking. When attached to a house, decking will extend your living space outside, essentially giving you another room if it's covered.

The key to a successful deck, one that will have a long, healthy life, is planning. You need to carefully look at:

- building approvals
- design, style and safety
- lay of the land and house
- angle of sunlight
- timber type
- effects of weather
- effects of rot and pests on timber
- protective finishes and fixing.

When building a deck, you should invest in graph paper to make sketches of your plans and run them by the experts at your Home Timber and Hardware store. Just work at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100 where one metre is perhaps 10 graph squares or centimetres. From here you

will be able to ensure you can comfortably accommodate the maximum number of people and pieces of furniture. Also take into account pot plants or planters to enhance the edges or corners of your deck.



## Assembly

**1** A deck is made up of stumps, bearers, joists and decking boards. To determine the position and size of these components, use the scale plan you have drawn.

**2** Clear the area of any tree stumps, roots and logs, and check if you need any soil excavated. There needs to be a 300mm space between the ground and bearers. Next mark out the site as accurately as possible with string lines and a carpenter's square for each corner.

**3** Once you have established where the stumps will be positioned, dig the holes ready to set the stumps. You can either set stumps in galvanised steel stirrups set in concrete footings, or directly place them into the ground and fill the holes with concrete. (Concrete stumps are generally the preferred option for stumps in Western Australia due to white ants.)

Once you have positioned them, mark the stump level with a spirit level and cut them to appropriate height.

**4** Allow the concrete to set for four

hours before fixing bearers. Secure the deck to the house by joining bearers to existing walls. Bearers can then be nailed to the rest of the stumps. When all bearers are in position, set the joists on top.

**5** Position joists every 450mm for hardwood decking, and 400mm for pine decking.

Fix joists to bearers by skew-nailing them with 75mm galvanised nails, and supporting them in galvanised framing anchors or hangers. At this point, you can point border beams up like the deck illustrated here.

## Laying the deck

As this is the most visible part of the deck, you should take the utmost care at this point. Decking boards come in two thicknesses – 19mm hardwood and 22mm softwood – and will span 450mm. Each board should be a minimum of 900mm (continuous over at least two spans), and rest on at least three joists. Allow 3mm–5mm between each board to allow water drainage.

To extend the life of decking, give all surfaces (including cut ends) and the top surface of joists one coat of primer stain, decking oil or a water-repellent preservative.

When laying, stagger the joints so they don't land on the same joist side by side, so there are never two end-to-end joints next to each other on the same joist. Allow the ends to overhang by about 50mm and trim neatly with a circular saw after they're all nailed down.

Once decking boards are fixed, you can apply coats of your chosen paint, stain, oil or clear finish. If you leave the

timber raw, remember it only looks good for so long before it fades to silvery grey, roughens and cracks.

Once all this is done – voilà! Your home will be the life of the party! 🏡

**NOTE:** The publisher takes no responsibility for the outcome of projects undertaken as a result of information published in this magazine.

### Save time and trouble

- Read all the instructions, rent the *How to Build a Deck* video, and talk to a Home Timber and Hardware expert before you start.

- Protect yourself.

When using power saws and drills, wear goggles and ear muffs.

- Wear gloves when handling timber

(but not when using power tools).

- Never burn treated timber. Dispose of off-cuts and sawdust through proper waste disposal, or just bury them.

- Make sure the site is well drained. Look at using agricultural drainage pipes if necessary as this will help drain away excess moisture.

- Before you start digging any stump holes, make sure there are no underground pipes or wires nearby.

- You may consider bracing your deck stumps if they are more than one metre high and supported in brackets, or if they are more than 1.8m and set in concrete.



## Get the Know-How

Home Timber and Hardware experts can be found in every state and are there to share their Know-How. They can help you with planning, sticking to budgets, and choosing the right materials, tools and designs. They can even give you advice on how to achieve council approval. Feel free to call in and ask for advice or product information, or ask about the Home range of DIY project leaflets. Phone 1300 659 089 for your nearest location.

